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ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "The Thinking Reed," the magazine published by Bethlehem Central High School, Delmar, New York. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles; (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: THE THINKING REED

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

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Robin D. Rapaport
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INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44

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earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

THE THINING REED

Bethlehem High School

Delmar, New York

Principal: Charles A. Gunner

Faculty Advisor: Mr. Robin D. Rapaport

Student Editors: Jaron Bourke, Anne Comi, Alicia Morris and Gillian Williams

"...Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in Nature, but he is a thinking reed."

-Blaise Pascal-

Bethlehem High School is a four-year public school located in Delmar, a suburban Albany community of approximately 10,000 residents. The 1,300 students come primarily from white collar/professional backgrounds, many with parents affiliated with the state university or the state goverment at Albany. The Thinking Reed has had a long and proud tradition of over twenty years at Bethlehem High School, but fell upon hard times and was not published for two years. The 1984 issues is a revival of that tradition, accomplished by a young staff, only one editor with previous experience, and a new faculty advisor. The new issue of the magazine was not only well received by the student body, but

was also successfully sold at book shops and art stores in the community.

FORMAT: NEW AND IMPROVED

Measuring 8 1/2" by 11", the 1984 issue of The Thinking Reed is 36 pages, center-stapled, and printed on cream felt-finish paper stock. The tan felt-finish card stock cover is illustrated with a portrait of a reed with a human face. The title of magazine is outlined along the right margin of the cover. Artwork also illustrates the back cover, and the inside front cover, where staff credits are listed. The magazine has no title page, and a poem is printed on the inside back cover.

A variety of typefaces are used within the magazine, including Souvenir Light, Spartan Book, and Folio. Black and white artwork and photographs complement the text.

Robin Rapaport, who has been advisor since the magazine was reissued in 1984, notes that the format has changed since the issues before the hiatus in publication. Although less "arty," subsequent issues are crisper and more professional in appearance, due in part to professional typesetting. Mr. Rapaport also observes an emphasis on principles of journalism in the recent editions.

PRODUCTION: DISCUSSION AND EXPERIENCE

Any interested student may participate on the magazine staff, and approximately 20 students see the magazine through production. The 1984 staff was composed of mostly 9th and 10th grade students, and only one editor with any production experience. Editors are selected by the advisor based on "a

combination of discussion and experience." The 1985 and 1986 staffs have had the benefit of continuity and experience among members.

All writing, art and photography, and design are done by students. The advisor completes about five percent of the editing and ten percent of the proofreading duties, while staff members complete the rest. Staff members also paste-up the camera copy, except for artwork plates and masking, which are done by a commercial printer. Typesetting and printing are also done commercially.

The advisor and staff members meet after school during the year. As the deadline approaches in the spring, they may meet on weekends and during spring break before the magazine goes to press. Mr. Rapaport will be teaching a creative writing course in 1986-87, but views the course as an opportunity to encourage submissions and does not anticipate moving production meetings to class time.

SUBMISSIONS: RATING SHEETS

All students are encouraged to submit writing and artwork by means of announcements and posters. Staff members also give presentations to the English classes, and Mr. Rapaport frequently attends the art classes encouraging students to submit artwork and photography. The number of submissions has increased each year, and only about 25 percent are published. For 1986, the staff received 270 pieces of writing and 160 pieces of art.

The name of the artist/author is removed from each submission to insure anonymity during evaluation. Every staff

member completes a rating sheet for each work. Those with generally positive ratings are set aside for publication, and those with "mixed reviews" are then discussed among the staff members until a concensus is reached. Staff members may work with the author of a promising piece, suggesting revisions. The author can then choose to revise and resubmit or let the work stand as is, although these unrevised pieces are seldom published.

Mr. Rapaport does not evaluate any of the submissions, but does direct the staff's attention to particular features in order to help them arrive at agreement about questionable works.

Surprisingly, a large portion of the works submitted do not come from students enrolled in the creative writing classes at Bethlehem High. Mr. Rapaport speculates that perhaps those students with better writing skills will tend to enroll in other, more college preparatory English courses. Students in the science fiction class, however, do frequently submit science fiction short stories generated by the course. In addition to poetry and fiction, the 1984 issue includes a one-act play.

FUNDING: LAYOUT BY LEDGER

The Thinking Reed is published on a budget of only $1,000, and Mr. Rapaport muses that the staff often designs and lays out pages "while checking our ledger to see if we can afford it." Just over half of the funding is allocated from the school budget, with the remaining 35 percent generated from donations, fundraising activities, and sale of the magazine. Most donations

are solicited from businesses by means of letters from the staff. Fundraising activities include cookie sales and a car wash.

The staff produced the 1984 issue of the magazine at a cost of $3.25 per copy, and sold it for $2.00 each. The 1985 issue sold for $3.00 per copy. As the magazine's popularity increases, the staff has increased the press run as well, from 300 copies in 1984, to 450 in 1985, and 600 for 1986.

A DREAM FOR THE THINKING REED

Mr. Rapaport concedes that the funding aspect of production sometimes has a debilitating effect. The fundraising activities generate limited profits, and while students are comfortable writing letters to solicit donations, they are not comfortable with face to face soliciting. Mr. Rapaport hopes to receive an increase in the funding provided by the school board.

In an even greater dream for The Thinking Reed, Mr. Rapaport would like to the staff have enough funding at the beginning of each year to produce the magazine in whatever way the editors choose. Mr. Rapaport, the magazine staff members, and the students who submitted works all deserve much credit for producing a magazine of such quality on the "first" issue. Whether funding reaches the level of Mr. Rapaport's ideal or falls somewhat short of it, the new Thinking Reed will undoubtedly continue its successful revival.

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Copies of The Thinking Reed may be obtained from

Bethlehem High School

700 Delaware Avenue

Delmar, NY 12054

Cost: $3.50 (includes postage)

The THINKING REED

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POEM

Words are my companions
and a poem my closest friend
venting frustrations on paper
relating some secret only I
can understand.
words used everyday
thrown away
overlooked
and never really understood.

KAREN GRUMME

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LIMITATIONS

I cannot make the sun rise,
however strong I be.
I cannot fill the sky with blue,
nor still the rolling sea.
I cannot make a rainbow,
nor wash the trees with rain.
I cannot make the bird sing,
nor ripen fields of grain.
I cannot make the sun set,
nor hang the amber moon.
I cannot usher in the dawn,
nor catch the early dew.
I cannot build a mountain,
with peaks of purple hue.
The world is filled with many things
that I cannot do.
But I *can* build a bridge
of love
to reach from me to you.

Jeff Wallace

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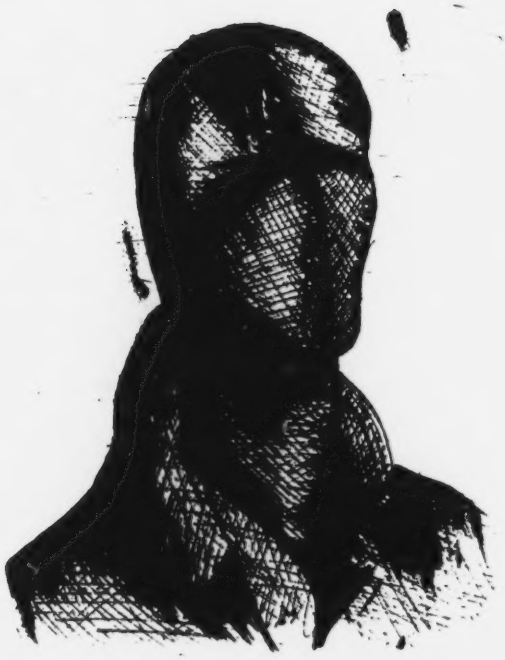
Essay

Poems these days
are wrinkles on the faces of
tombstones;
Consider the ridiculousness
of this recurrent horror(!):
a page
and a pen
in the hand
of a human, dare It
remark on the residues
of walking erect.

Jaron Bourke



Mike Agnew

Uncle Frank April 1, 1984.

He's dying
He's dying
He's dead
It's a horrible auction, you were just in.
Going
Going
Gone
Like a musty piece of furniture
or the first Kewpie doll ever,
SOLD,
to the highest bidder.
God, you are a cruel auctioneer.

But, I have to go on weaving
my human patterns,
painting my utopian pictures,
writing my misspelled words,
and never knowing
if I am the next commodity to be sold.

Gabriella Mirabelli

The Devil of Aactimw

By James Edgar

I was more than happy to pause in my studying and talk to the thin young man that had just approached me. I had been studying a text on an obscure African culture for a course I wished I had never taken. "Yes," I said looking up from my chair into his homely but sincere face. Brushing some of his short black hair out of his eyes, he said with an almost desperate edge to his voice, "Mr. Edgar . . . or may I call you James? Yes. Well, might I just have a word with you?" At this point, I was thinking that the poor fellow was probably a starting salesman trying to sell a useless product with no success. Oh well, I could listen, and if it did not hurt my wallet too much, I might just help him.

"Sure," I replied.

"I know you are taking Ancient African Cultures and Their Impact on the Modern World," he said with a smile.

"What? How did you . . . oh, the book. Yeah, well I got suckered into it by an overanxious guidance counselor."

"No, it's not that," he ammended innocently. "You see, you're on my list."

Clearly, I did not see.

"I have a list of all the people taking AACTIMW," he explained, producing a small carbon copy of a list of names. Naturally, I searched for my own, and when I found it, I noticed a small black marking next to my name. "I don't know how to . . ." he was saying as I cut him off.

"Why the list, and what's the mark for?" I get insecure when I see little black marks next to my name.

"That's just it, you see. I know that you're not doing too well, and I want to help."

There is not such thing as a free lunch, thought I. "No thanks, I'll study."

"You've been studying, and all it's gotten you is two 75s and a 60." That got to me.

"Hey, look. I don't know where you come off searching through people's grades, but keep out of mine." Deliberately ignoring him, I returned to my reading.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend. All I want to do is help." I didn't need his help, so I told him to do a few chest presses with too much weight on the bar, preferably out of earshot of help. He continued anyway. "Maybe I'm not doing this right. You see, I'm a devil. No, don't give me that look. I mean it: a devil."

"Tell me about it," I suggested sarcastically. He took me literally.

"I'm the devil of AACTIMW. I'm the one who convinced Professor Gordens to design the course." That almost convinced me that he was a devil. "Since I conned him into making it, it's only wrong . . ."

Wrong?

" . . . that I help you pass the final."

"Don't devils have more evil things to do?" I asked a bit contemptuously, falling into the act.

"Well," he answered regretfully, "the old ones do, like Cain. Lucifer gave him murder. Some others with especially great sins are allowed to tempt people to large evils. Jim Jones died after me and he was given the power to tempt to heresy."

"You mean that because you died recently and didn't sin much, Lucifer only gave you power to tempt people to little evils within a college course?"

"Yes," he admitted deflatedly. He was so sincere, I had to remind myself to stay aware for the line where this jokester would make a fool of me and walk off laughing. He went on disgustedly, "The only reason I went to Hell and became a devil is that I sold used cars." I tried to hide a smile rather unsuccessfully. "It's not funny!" he insisted. "You don't know how few sins there are that one can commit in a college course. Cain brings in homicidal souls every day, but all I get are students that fall asleep in class, tell off their teacher, or cheat on a quiz?" Then with enthusiasm, "Sometimes I even catch a guy having a sexual fantasy. But that's not really great, is it? I mean not compared to murder." I was thinking about Annette who sat next to me in Ancient African Cultures. Had I let my mind wander lately? No, I was clean. Then, it hit me . . .

"You want me to cheat on the final. Is that it?"

"Well, I just wanted to help you. I know you probably wouldn't pass otherwise. It just seemed to me that you've never really understood the exact nature of the impact ancient African cultures have on our modern everyday life . . ."

"What impact?" I asked, annoyed.

"That's it, you see. You'll never pass that test. So I have these answers . . ."

"That you want me to write on my arm," I finished for him while examining the paper he held in front of me. It even listed the items which needed to be stated within the essays.

"I always have approved of the arm method. Nevertheless, you needn't feel bound to any one way."

"What about my soul?" I questioned while mentally computing the average of two 75s, a 60 and a 100.

"77.5 and its a small sin," he answered.

"I might even be forgiven, right?"

"*He* has a distressing tendency towards doing that." The devil looked very indignant. "So I can write these on your arm?" he asked, apparently thinking that I was convinced.

"No."

"Why not?" he demanded.

"I've enough sins." As I said this, I was inwardly condemning myself as an idiot doomed to fail in life.

"You're making a big mistake. You could be . . ."

"Go to Hell," I suggested.

"Not without your soul."

"You can't have it."

"I won't give up," he warned. Scowling, he left. Once he was gone, I sighed with relief; I had almost succumbed.

The day the test came, and I still had not heard from the devil. That was good. I might not have withstood him again. Sitting down in the long classroom, I noticed Annette had arrived before me. She was wearing a denim mini-skirt that showed off most of her gorgeous legs. Oops, I thought, I better keep my thoughts clean with that devil just watching to catch me off gaurd.

Professor Gordens started to pass out the test. As my packet was handed to me, I gasped. It was over a quarter of an inch thick. "Alright," the professor said, "you may begin. I wish you luck."

I needed more than luck: I needed a miracle. I found myself increasingly considering such questions as what, who, where and is it, cosmically speaking, all that incredibly important that I pass this test?

My eyes wandered, and I noticed that Annette was sitting strangely. She was holding one arm behind her as she scratched out answers at a furious pace. Then it hit me that with her arm behind her like that I could read her answer paper easily. Mentally comparing our two tests, I decided that she was probably correct in those many places where our answers disagreed. Going back, I ammended my test accordingly.

"Time," the professor called. "Everyone pass up his test." as I watched my test disapper into the stack being passed up the row, Annette whispered to me, "How do you think you did?"

"How did you do?" I parried.

"I did great. That was an easy test."

Really, I thought, relieved. "I think I did well too," I told her.

She smiled. "It's funny," she said thoughtfully.

"What is, Annette?"

"Just before the test, this weird thin man bet me twenty bucks that I couldn't keep one arm behind me during the test. I guess I'll have to find him and collect."

I Know Something Good About You

Wouldn't this old world be better
If the folks we meet would say,
"I know something good about you!"
and treat us in just that way?

Wouldn't it be fine and dandy
if each hand clasped warm and true
carried with it this assurance
"I know something good about you!"

Would life be lots more happy
if we praised the good we see?
for there's such a lot of good
in the worst of you and me

Wouldn't it be nice to practice
that fine way of thinking too
you know something good about me
"I know something good about you!"

Jeff Wallace

"I'm leaving," Travis suddenly announced. I choked on my soda and started coughing.

"You're what?" I asked in between coughs.

"I'm leaving; sometime tomorrow." He sounded so calm. Dad looked up, said nothing, and went back to his dinner. I looked back at Travis; he was eating too! I quickly excused myself and went into my room.

I sat on my bed, trying desperately to figure out why Travis suddenly wanted to leave. I knew we hadn't gotten along when Dad went on his business trip and left Travis in charge. He wasn't very happy about having to "babysit." We'd fought a lot, but so do most brothers and sisters. I just couldn't think of anything I had done to make him want to leave.

I pulled the blanket around my shoulders and tried to sleep. Morning would be soon enough to try to talk to him.

In envisioned what I'd say to him, and what he'd reply. First, I'd go into the kitchen, where he'd be sitting, eating breakfast. I'd walk over to the table, sit down, and start talking.

"Why're you goin' Travis? Was it something I did?" I'd ask. I just had to know. He'd look at me, and gently say, "Jessie, you had nothing to do with this. It's my idea and my choice." Feeling a little relieved, I'd ask, "It's not because you had to stay here while Dad was gone, is it?" He'd put his hand on my shoulder and say, "I'm not mad at you, honest." He'd look down at the table. "I guess I was mad because I couldn't go, so I took it out on you. But I wasn't

mad at you," he'd explain. I'd ask him where he was going to go, and he'd reply, "Oh, I don't know. There's lots of places I want to see. I want to go out west for a while." Travis always had a strange fascination with the west.

I'd wait a few seconds, and say, "You can't leave, Travis, you don't have any money!" But I knew what he'd say. He'd say, "I've been savin' for awhile. If I run low, I'll get a job doing something." He'd have it all planned out. Then, I figured he'd say something like, "Jessie, I'd have thought that you of all people would be happy to see me go." I'd know he would be joking, and would try to grin.

"Yeah, I should, shouldn't I? I don't know. I guess figured that once Dad came home, you wouldn't be mad anymore. I just didn't figure on you packin' up and leaving," I'd admit.

I couldn't think about what would come next. I remembered back to when Travis and I were younger. I used to tag along with him all the time. He taught me how to swim, how to jump fences, and how to climb trees. He even taught me how to ride my bike. As I thought about it, even when he was mean, and I hated him, at least he was still there to yell at.

A lump grew in my throat and a tear rolled down my cheek. I didn't want him to go. I'd miss him too much. I really loved him. I wished to God I could tell him that. "I love you," are the three hardest words for me to say. I curled up, hugged my pillow and cried myself to sleep.

I woke with a start. I jumped out of bed and got dressed as quickly as I could. I had to talk to Travis before he left! I had to tell him everything before it was too late.

I ran out to the kitchen. It was empty! I raced into the front hall. The door was open. I ran outside to the driveway.

Dad was standing there all alone, waving to Travis, who was driving down the street.

I ran to the end of the driveway, and cried out, "Travis!" I waved to him. He waved back, but never stopped. "I love you Travis! I love you," I whispered as he disappeared around the corner.

Elissa Kotzin

AMERICAN SUBURB

Dead squirrels.
Dead dogs on burlap sacks.
Dead leaves,
Dead promises,
Dead connection.
Dead tunes.
Deadheads.
Dead fathers.
Dead strife
Dead life.

Elizabeth Logiudice

Denise Giordano

Lisa Vancans

A gift to thee I wish I had
A gift of joy when times are bad
A gift of health when you are ill
When weak and helpless, a gift of will.
A gift of youth when you are aged
A gift of freedom when you are caged
A gift of friends when you're alone
When tired and cold, a gift of home.
A gift of courage when you have fright
A gift of food when there is blight
A gift of peace when there is war
And a gift of love when there's no more.

Alicia Morris

I crawl to the end of the bed
and push the window up.
The air is still there,
Tight,
Scolding,
Go to sleep now air,
I won't ever scream again.

Anon.

An Adventure Of A Transdimensional

By Albert Dickey

It was the day after the Christmas of 2019 and I was very excited, because my father had just bought a new model C333 computer. It was the first computer for sale that could telepathically put images into the human mind, instead of just words, letters, and simple feelings like the old ones could.

My father was part of the team that developed the first of the telepathic machines twenty years ago for the C.I.A. It turned out to be a huge waste of research money, though, because a telepathic computer seemed like a very useful invention, but it has one major drawback: A computer, being so far, very simple, cannot do the extremely complicated task of reading a human mind. It can only send pre-designed signals to the brain, so the C.I.A. found no practical spying use for it, and sold the plans and patents to many major computer companies, and my father was promptly hired by one of them, Tele Psi (the biggest) for a huge salary.

My father took the computer into his study, turned it on and said, "It needs no screen, since I can rely entirely on its telepathic broadcast for visual contact." This I already knew, but I didn't tell him so, since he is very formal in his demonstrations, and hates to be interrupted. "To see it," he continued, "think about the computer and concentrate on what it is broadcasting, just like the other computers, but for this one, try to see a video display, instead of hearing words. I have used one at work, already, so I can see it already. It's like the other ones, you see. Once you have tuned in to it, you have the ability to tune into it easily any time after that. To help you see it, I can tell you that there are four small, white squares in each corner of the quote-unquote screen. Try to see them."

I closed my eyes and envisioned four small, white squares arranged as corners of a large square and tried to concentrate on them. I then started to ask several desperate questions, which my father refused to answer by saying something like "keep concentrating," or "you'll see," so I stopped blabbing and put all my brainwork into concentration. Finally, it came. The squares became very definite, and suddenly didn't need any more concentrating on to appear in front of me. "Dad, I think I've got it," I said happily. He smiled with a look of success and said, "Good, now we can proceed. The four squares mark the corners of your screen, and when you have a three dimensional screen, there are eight little cubes to mark your boundaries." He pushed a key which replaced the squares with the eight cubes that he had mentioned. The effect was very beautiful. I could see the cubes from all directions at the same time. A magazine article about the C333, that I had read, said that the human mind thinks of objects in three dimensions, but it is usually limited in what it sees by its two dimensional eyes. The C333 is able to bypass the eyes, so that the person receiving the image can see all sides of it, as if it had eyes all around it.

The next thing my father did was to insert the globe program crystal. In the magazine article, they had a section about the globe program. They said it was a model of the Earth, so highly detailed you couldn't see the whole thing at once, and take in all its detail too. You can concentrate on a small area, though, and see it in higher resolution, but then, the rest of the globe disappears from your mind.

The globe came on the screen, and I told my father that I knew all about it, so as not to listen to a speech. It was amazing to be able to see all of the world at once, instead of just half of it at a time like I could see from an ordinary globe, with my two dimensional eyes, and instead of seeing it crushed down on paper, not showing too well that the Pacific Ocean joins to itself at the other end. I started searching New York City for my house, but then my father told me I had plenty of time to look at it later, and started to tell me, in great detail, how the computer worked. I could only understand about half of what he said. I picked up that it used a three dimensional grid to remember the picture, made up of very small squares. Then it would transfer the image to your mind with some method that I couldn't understand at all. It seemed like he was going to talk for ever. I just wanted to play with that beautiful globe thing. I am very interested in computers and also telepathetics, but, at the time, what my father was telling me didn't seem very interesting.

I soon got tired of the globe program, though and started to learn how to write programs for pictures. By New Year's Day, I was making my own 3D pictures and was thoroughly consumed in memory organization and all that stuff.

It probably seems like no surprise, then, that the first day

"We have developed so much now that we don't even look human. My brain has developed monstrously."

of school came like a rude awakening to my computer fun. My first class, computer class, was probably the only bearable one of the day. It was a required course which was still a bit of a drag for me, because I knew practically everything being taught. All the rest of the class generally knew a lot about computers, but they knew nowhere near as much as I did, being the son of a vice president at Tele-Psi. My project partner, Thelma was the only person in the class that knew near as much about computers as I did. She is very quick thinking, and can work about three times as fast as I can. When we worked on programs together, I would work out the basic approach of how to write the program, and then she would say, "Oh of course, I see," and then leave me in the dust as she typed in the program at light speed, asking for help only a few times when she got stuck. That made us a good team, which was good since half our grade was based on how well we worked with our partners. Our teacher assigned everyone a partner as part of some new-fangled education plan for teaching us to work as a team, like in a real corporation. My father was always going on about how he wished he'd been taught to work well with other people and how valuable it was in life, but I almost don't feel like I learned anything with Thelma. She's so nice, it's hard not to get along with her.

That day, we were starting on a unit on memory configuration, and our teacher, Ms. Rivers, was going over all the different kinds of memory. "You already know about individual memory locations. What you have yet to learn is different ways of arranging them in the computer as arrays." I always hated it when she made general statements about what "we" had yet to learn. "They can be arranged in a line, with a number to distinguish each one from the others in its line. They can be arranged in a square with two numbers distinguishing each one, the first one for which column it is in, and the second for which row it is in. This is used in making graphs and pictures. There is a memory cube, too, which is used most of the time for 3D pictures, and there is even a 4D array, but we won't go into that, of course, you can't make a picture out of it."

That started me thinking. Could you make a picture with a 4D array? I remembered reading in a book that there may be four dimensional objects all over the place but we can't see them because our eyes can only see in 2 dimensions and our brains translate what we see into 3 dimensions, but our brains can't see four dimensions in what we get from our eyes. Maybe I could see a 4D array on the C333, with its 3D, telepathic display. Well it seemed like a fun project to do even if it did seem a bit impossible.

Ms. Rivers gave us our assignments for the day and Thelma and I finished ours early, as usual, so we started to talk. I told her I had gotten a C333 for Christmas, and she was very interested. "Oh my god! That's the thing with the amazing telepathic display thing," she said with amazement.

I confirmed her statement and invited her to come over and see it after school. She said that she would be around later, since she lived only a block away from me and could walk over. She frequently came over to work with me on the computer homework assignments. The homework, as opposed to the classwork, is supposed to be done by the individual, but then again, a little teamwork never hurt anyone.

In all my other classes, I thought about that 4D stuff. It grew on me the more I thought about it, because the more I thought, the more possible it seemed. On the bus home I told Thelma about my idea, but she didn't seem too impressed, probably because she hadn't been fooling herself all day that it might work. She said she would be by in about an hour as she got off the bus. When I got home, I immediately turned on the computer, throwing all my homework up in my room to do later. My parents couldn't give me a hard time, because they both worked and wouldn't be home for another three hours. It was not as easy as it seemed to put a 4D picture onto a 3D screen. I must have been working unsuccessfully for about an hour, because I gave up just before Thelma came over. I helped her see the picture with the four square method, and then showed her the globe program. She was about as amazed as I thought she would be. After about ten minutes of her being mesmerized by the image, I went into the kitchen for something to eat. In about forty-five minutes, she got sick of it and told me she had to leave. I asked her to take a look at my 4D program first, and she did, but rather reluctantly. When she had finished looking at it, though, she was very enthusiastic. You see Thelma is more interested in, and better at dealing with, the program itself than the idea behind it. I am more interested in the ideas. That is why we make such a great team.

She made a few small changes in the program, and it worked! A picture appeared which put me in a sort of trance. We just sat there for about ten minutes, dazed. Then she finally said something. "I can't believe this is happening to me. The fourth dimension! I can see it. This is it! The fourth dimension!" There was a short pause while she probably looked again in her mind to make sure it was really true. "Why us? Yeah, why us? Billions of people on this Earth with thousands of genius scientists wondering if the fourth dimension exists and if so what it is, and here we are, two sixteen year olds . . ." She went on and on. I paid very little attention to her, though. I was too busy trying to answer my lifelong questions about the fourth dimension, which I could now answer by looking at this strange object. I could see the whole fourth dimension through that object. It's impossible to explain what I saw, but I can tell you that it was clear to me that every point of space was joined to every other point through the fourth dimension. Meaning you could be anywhere instantly, if you could only get into the fourth dimension. Then she said "It's all joined." She then disappeared and reappeared at the other end of the room."

Instead of being shocked, I shouted "excellent," and teleported across the room with the greatest of ease. "You can go through the fourth dimension just by thinking of it."

We had some fun teleporting around the room for a while, before we settled down and had a serious thought. We both made a solemn agreement not to tell anyone about our abilities or any of our discoveries. We would keep it to ourselves and, for once, have life on a string. The World was going fine without it anyway, so why share it when you can have it all. It was so excellent to be a master of space. I felt like going to some distant, exciting place right then, so I said, "I know, let's go to California City."

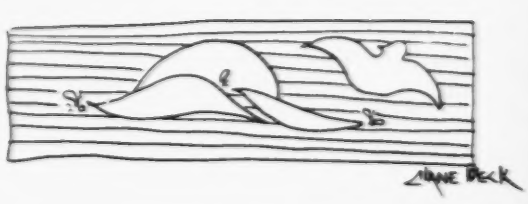
Krista Mackey

Your tower rises above me
To distant heights of our youth.
The walls are not dark or forbidding,
Only unaware of my silent need.
All this I know which
Upon reflections, saddens my thoughts.
Yet I am contect to quietly bask
In the coolness of your shadow.

Anne Comi

Throughout the empty house
Stopping at the window
To gaze listlessly
At the footprints in the snow
My mind is so full of things
And yet they all run together
Creating an endless void
Smooth and rounded
No sharpness to
Puncture or jar my thoughts
I slump into a chair
Tears sting my eyes.

Gillian Williams



"Sure, why not, no problem."

Thelma went first, then I went, thinking of going the same place Thelma did, instead of thinking of any particluar place. Even so, I ended up right next to Thelma. For a split second, it was as if I knew where everything in the universe was, so I could choose exactly where I wanted to go. We were in some well built up area. I recognized it as the Los Angeles region of California City. I had been there before, when I was visiting my grandparents. Luckily, nobody saw us appear, even though there were a few people around.

"It's amazing. It's almost like I had a map to point to, like I could see the whole universe perfectly to decide where I wanted to go," Thelma stated.

"I know, but maybe it's true, because all space is joined through the fourth dimension and we went through that. Maybe you can see the whole universe from that point."

"Amazing, let's look around," she said, walking to a store. It turned out to be a laundromat, though, so we started to walk right past, when an ad taped to the window caught Thelma's eye. "Oh that's right. There's that big 'Life' concert here tonight. I wish I could go."

"Life" is one of those modern rock groups that uses psychic enhancers in their concerts to transmit the most amazing feelings to their audiences. Their songs are also amazing, and they are probably the best group of all time. I really like them myself and wanted to see them, also.

"Hey, we can go to the concert. We can go anywhere, remember?"

"Yes, but I have homework, and my parents . . ."

"Okay, I've got it. We can go back home, have dinner, do homework, and pretend to go to bed. Then we can go to the concert. What time does it start?"

"Hmmm, let's see," she said looking at the poster. "It begins at eight. I'll never get to bed before eight."

"Hey, wait a minute, we are in an earlier time zone, so if we leave at eleven there, it'll still only be eight here."

"Oh, of course."

"Meet me outside my house at eleven and we'll be off. Okay?"

"Fine, I guess."

I then teleported home. My parents would be home soon, so I started working on my homework and finished it before they got back. Then we had dinner, I watched my favorite T.V. program and studied for a chemistry test and other stuff, until just before eleven when I made a huge announcement that I was going to bed, so that nobody would notice me gone. It was a really stupid idea to meet Thelma outside my house. Boy, was it cold! It was about ten minutes before Thelma appeared. By that time, I was really glad to be going out to L.A. where it was warmer. The concert was in the huge Albert Dickey Memorial Bowl, and then we teleported there, it was in full swing, and people were going crazy with excitement, so few people noticed us appear. The ones that did, thought that we were just another of Life's amazing visual effects, and, therefore, ignored us.

One trouble with not buying tickets, is that you have no reserved seats. We stood up for about half an hour, but we soon found two seats next to each other. After about two hours of the ultimate, mind blowing experience, Thelma announced she was getting tired, and that she would leave now, but she just sat there. "My god! I can't do it!" she screamed. I tried teleporting myself, but also failed, so I suggested that we leave the stadium and try again. After a long time of pushing and shoving, we finally got out, but we still couldn't teleport. "It must have been that damned psychic enhancer that did it. I've heard of those things really messing up people's minds. Well we can't exactly walk back," concluded Thelma.

"We have to get to a C333. I know, we can go to a computer store that sells them, type in the 4D program and hope that it refreshes our minds."

"Let's hope we can find one that is open this time of night."

We searched the near-by streets but found no open computer stores, but we did find a phone booth with a phone book in it. We started looking in the yellow pages for local computer stores. I found one and phoned it. They were open! And, yes, they did sell the C333. Thelma wrote down the address, and we set out to search for it. It was no problem finding it, since it was only two blocks away. We went in and found the shop keeper demonstrating the model C100 to a man and his son. That was good, a distraction. Thelma went over to the C333 on display and typed the program in at her usual speed. Then we waited for one man who was standing around watching us to leave before we started it. It worked. We were very careful to delete the program before we left. Thelma teleported first, then I went to the same place she did. We ended up outside her front door. She was complaining again about the strange feelings she got as she supposedly went through the fourth dimension, which connects everything. I had the same feelings too. That got me wondering. If we could go through the fourth dimension, could we stay there also? As I thought of going there, I actually did. It was amazing. I felt like I was the universe, like each and every part of it was a part of me. I could see the whole universe in front of me in every detail, including Thelma sarcastically saying, "Well, don't bother saying goodbye" to herself as she searched for her front door key. Feeling rather rude, I zapped myself back to her and said "Thelma you have to see this. It's awesome. Go into the fourth dimension."

"What do you mean? How?" She insisted.

"Think."

She disappeared after about five seconds, so I went after her. Sure enough, she was there, just staring at it, speechless. We stayed there, in each others arms, for the longest time, "feeling" the universe. I guess the best way of explaining the feeling is "perfectly content," feeling the universe in perfect working harmony, and you, master of it. The combination of being content and everything that had happened all day, put me and Thelma to sleep, right there.

I woke up to the sound of Thelma crying and screaming "Let me out of here!" I looked at her, and then myself. We were transparent, like plastic wrap. We had been converted from matter to refractions of space. There was no way back, either. Trapped in here forever. Our bodies were developing accordingly to 4D space, and we kept developing.

We have developed so much, now, that we don't even look human. My brain has developed monstrously. I can now intelligently keep track of every event in the universe, and I have seen so many things. I have seen my father delete my 4D program along with all my others, without even looking at it, for fear that he might start crying about my death. I have seen the Earth destroy itself, totally, with the same selfish greed that trapped us here because we refused to give others our ability. I see other civilizations heading in the same direction that the Earth was. Thelma and I would have a lot to tell them about the dangers of selfishness, if they could only rescue us.

I was sitting on my front porch,
Trying to feed my head.
The government man came up my steps,
And told me I was dead.

Shot on the 38th parallel
My body was finally found.
They brought it home in a wooden box
A proper burial in the ground.

"You are obviously mistaken.
Another screw-up," I said.
"I am here in living flesh,
So how can I be dead?"

I got out my old dog tags
And my old civilian I.D.
I finally got the old man sure
The body wasn't me.

He coughed, and then he blushed a bit,
Then coughed a little more.
"Tell me son," he said at last,
"What's the name of the vet next door?"

Elizabeth Logiudice

BALLOON FESTIVAL

Balloons
Floating bouncily
Each bearing a name
HOPE is chatting cheerfully
With LOVE
And CARE is here
But Hush!
The star has arrived . . .
. . . Introducing EGO!
As he passes by
The sweet balloons swell with pride
Until at last
They can no longer contain themselves
And burst
Leaving limp shriveled remnants
Behind.

Gillian Williams

GOOD-BYE

Once,
I felt protected by your side.
I look back now,
    and see I was being used.
        I see,
        you looked, but never really
        saw me.
I feel
        you held, but never really
        felt me.
I know
    life goes on,
    though there will be more pain.
I'll miss you for a while;
    tears will fall.
But,
    there will be more smiles,
    more laughter,
    more rainbows,
    more summers,
And
    more love
Because
    life really does go on.

Mary McCarthy

1.

Behind a purple knoll are the knotted
and buried spring trees whose last
leaves censor light over the labyrinth. Buckled fetally
an oily institution, brickless and windowless,
deceives probing truths with the electric commands for
a mouthful of lies and girlish soft eyes.
Like grey, scientific agar it
mindlessly meditates hungry quasi-thoughts: for
fame, for girls, for something else to drink.
Private philosophies help getting through the nights.
There are fixing corners and doorways where satiety
is a nirvana high; impressions
are lead-weighted and putrid like exhaust fumes.
By touch and feel and listen and see and taste
and know people are pithed frogs,
supine on dissection boards, kicking and bucking
when theology students apply the wires.

2.

Cranial chrysanthemums hallucinate pulses of living:
pickled, scarred, dead-on-arrival,
educated, masticated, led without a leader's balls,
confused with smears of politics and physics and self.
It's no surprise that a greyed
Mortimer uprooted his last hairs so the pores sweated red.
"Dear, oh Honey, Apoplexy called and wants you to go bowling
tonight." The unused eighty-percent sought its revenge
but the Mind's Giving Hand knocked down the brewing malcontents;
Mortie was reincarnated as the meatball
on the plate of a corpulent vegetarian.

3.

Brains live
as steamed broccoli
trees, knived before
they flower.

By Jaron Bourke

Reflection Upon Prisons

Brick by brick, I built a wall,
Surrounding me.
I felt comfortable, secure.
Then the loneliness set in,
And brick by brick, I tore my wall down.
But a wall of stone appeared beyond,
A wall of foreign hand,
And the lower my walls became,
The higher the stones'
And this time I could not break free.

Alicia Morris

NIGHTMARE
By Hoang-Mai Cai

The last of the waves broke against the rocks. It was as if some great hand had suddenly turned off the tidal flow of the ocean. There was a deafening stillness everywhere. The mist moved slowly across the surface of the ocean and the empty beach that stretched for miles on both sides of her. This didn't seem to bother her until a figure made his way through the mist. It was Jerry, her little boy. His eyes contained a helpless and frightened look that begged her for help and comfort. The little mouth formed the word "Mommy." While no sound came from his mouth, she heard it anyway.

"Jerry!" Janie screamed. She found herself waking up from another one of her nightmares. But it couldn't have been all a dream; it was so real, especially his voice, though he hadn't learned to speak yet.

Beth, her younger sister, rushed into the room. "Janie, are you O.K.?"

"Yes, just another of my nightmares, but this time I felt him so strongly."

"Why don't you get some rest. You've got to get rid of those dark circles under your eyes and that tired look," Beth advised. This was her chance to be the older sister and be strong for both of them.

"I don't know. All I get out of sleeping are those horrible nightmares the last two days."

"You mustn't be afraid. Maybe you'll get some rest for the last few hours."

"O.K."

"Goodnight, dear."

The light flashing through her window reflected off her bedroom mirror and broke Janie's peaceful sleep. "Thank goodness for that peace," Janie thought. The nightmare from the night before was clear in her mind. This special morning she felt very hungry, especially with the smell of bacon and eggs from the kitchen.

"Good morning, Beth."

"Why Janie, how was your night after I left? You look awfully good."

"Fine. I wasn't disturbed after you left. Has officer Hanson phoned with any news of the kidnappers?"

"I'm sorry to say, no. But the office phoned and you are permitted to take a week off from work to rest."

The day passed slowly, but her loneliness was lessened with Beth there to keep her company. Then came the time she dreaded most. She felt like a little girl again waiting to crawl into her mother's bed. She cried herself to sleep. Suddenly, a baby's cry broke the silence from Jerry's room. "He's probably wet," Janie thought. She groped for the hall lights and made her way to the baby's room. She opened the door and a figure glowed through the darkness. It was Jerry. This time he spoke and Janie heard him clearly.

"Mommy, I miss you! I know where you can find me this time. I heard them talking about it."

Janie gasped for breath and rubbed her eyes. This was her baby's conscience! Somehow it seemed more real and more frightening than any dream.

"I'll be departing from an airplane at the Massachusetts Airport at gate 13. Please come! The plane will arrive at 8:00 a.m." Then the image faded.

She tried to quell the spasm of fear growing in her body, tried to concentrate on what had to be done. She phoned Officer Hanson.

"Maybe it was another nightmare, Janie. Please, calm down, dear," he said sleepily.

"No, this wasn't a dream. I saw it all. You've got to believe me!" she cried.

"I'll tell you what. I'll send a couple of officers to check every baby at the airport." He was unconvincing. After he hung up, she sat with the phone absentmindedly against her ear. The insistent "Buzz" was no comfort.

Janie didn't trust these policemen. They have more to worry over than just her case, but her case is more important than a stolen

diamond case. Her baby is worth more than all the diamonds in the world! She decided to fetch Jerry herself. The half an hour ride to the airport seemed longer than usual. She switched positions constantly.

The airport wasn't crowded as usual, so she found her way to gate 13 easily. The plane hadn't arrived yet and the waiting was torture. She should have asked Beth to come just to be safe, but foolish impulse told her not to.

The plane had finally arrived. Janie searched for anyone carrying a child. She noticed a couple and a middle-aged woman strolling toward her. Then, Janie felt it. Her instinct pulled her to the couple with a baby wrapped in a blanket. As she headed toward them, her baby's cry rang through her mind again and again.

"Why, what a cute baby! What's its name?" she stuttered.

"Um, its Paul. Please, we're in a hurry," the man said in an unfriendly tone.

"Why so pale?" She started to become angry instead of afraid.

"He's just a little sick!" the woman protested her intrusion.

Janie felt its forehead. It lay lifeless and cold to her touch. "No, it can't be. Why didn't you warn me, Jerry? No!!!" She fell to her knees and sobbed.

Two policemen stopped the couple, for they had observed it all. Then lights flashed everywhere, and a kind of soft whistle began to build until it reached an earsplitting crescendo.

"This was the most bizarre murder I've ever seen," the police sergeant confided to reporters two days later. "It was murder, grand theft and smuggling all in one. The kidnappers had stolen diamonds and smuggled them in a dead baby."

REALITY

I am walking down a long hall;
my life's story on the walls of glass —
people and places I know well
They are moving, talking;
I pass them by — some unseen force pushes
me forward

After a while, I notice a figure —
present in every scene.
Her form is familiar, but
her face is obscured by a cloud, a mist.
Her habits are repulsive to me —
I, who admire strength —
she cringes and pesters,
always groveling in the dirt.

As I pass onward,
I grow to despise her —
she has no backbone; everything
she says reveals
her lack of personality,
and shallowness of mind.

The figures grow fewer, until
I finally reach the present.
There are no shapes on the walls now,
save one — that same faceless character.

I try to pass —
she follows me — I stop and start,
and so does she.
I confront her.

"Why do you follow me?"
no answer.

"I do not want your company."
(a more polite approach, perhaps)
still no response

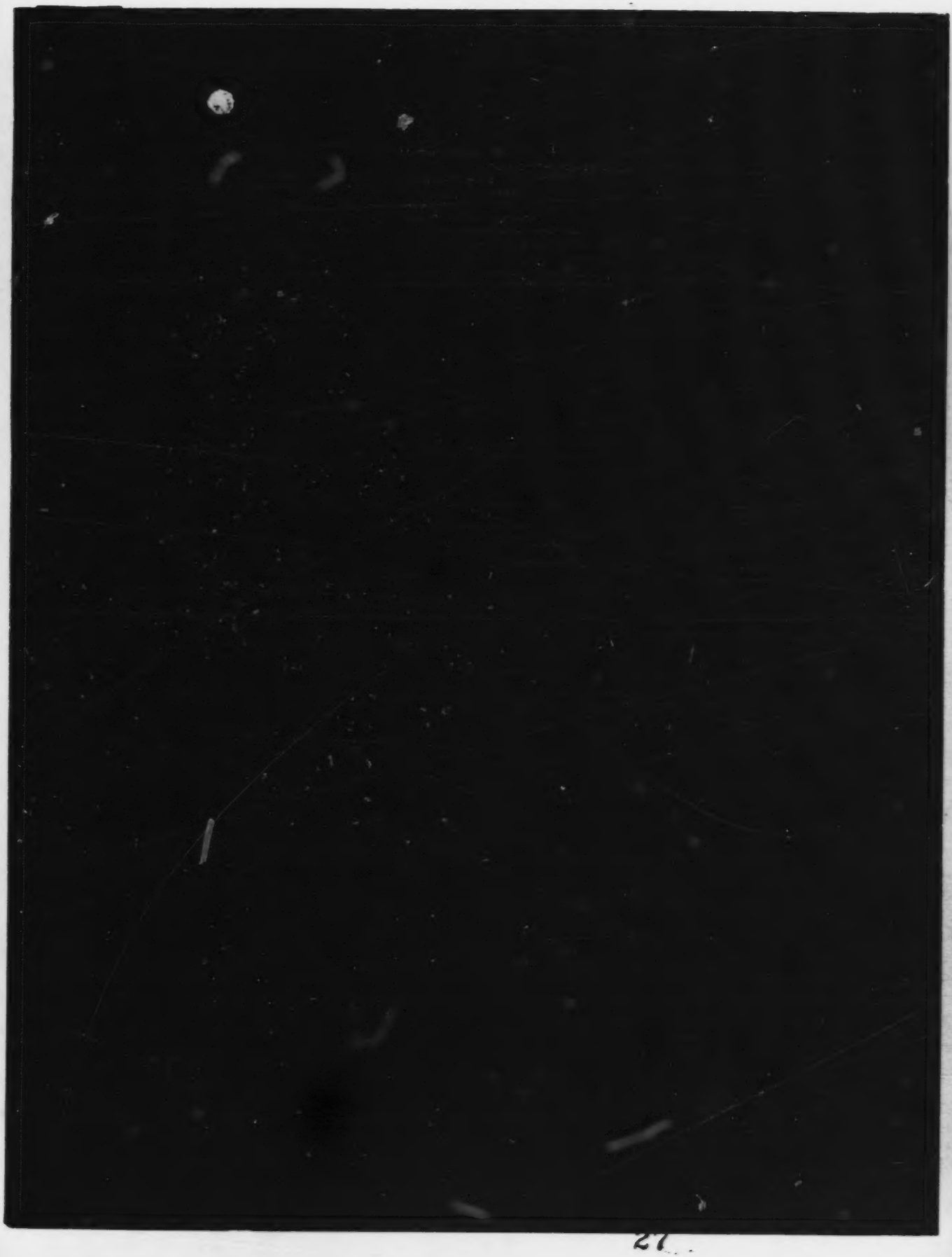
I run, but she follows.
I stop, finally, exhausted and enraged.
I shout, my anguish bordering on hysteria.

"Go away!
Why, you of all others?
Are you to haunt me all my life?
Must I be forever burdened by your
presence?"

I stare hard, trying to sense a reaction.
I scream;
"I hate you! Hate, Hate, HATE!!"

My fury has hold of me —
my hand reaches out to strike the figure
Only to discover, as my palm reaches the wall,
that the glass is a mirror,
and the face
that shatters and scatters across the floor
is MINE

Portia Wu



DEATH

By Jon Forbes

In life, I have seen prejudice, crime, poverty, war, and, most of all, death.

Two of my family members died awhile ago. I am often pensive about what it would be like to travel into heaven. I also think about how lucky they were to be leaving the problem-prone earth.

When Doctor Lewis told me I had only three weeks left in my life because of a malignant tumor that surgery could not cure, I felt relieved. It was like I craved death, like life was a heavy burden that only death could cure.

The day finally came. It was a hot June day and I was with my friends. We were all playing softball in an abandoned field. I was in right field at the time. There was a hard hit grounder that traveled through the first baseman's glove and out into the field between center and right. Since the center fielder had tripped, it was my duty to receive the ball. As I ran faster and faster towards the rolling ball I could hear the kids urging me on. Suddenly there was a pounding in my head; then I went blank. I knew, at this point, that I was star-crossed. I could still hear the kids urging me on. One of the boys yelled to me to get up. I tried. It was no use, I couldn't even move, let alone get to my feet. Two of the boys started running towards me, yelling to me to get up. When they got to me they shook me for nearly two minutes before they forfeited. They knew they could not to revive me, so one of the boys went to call the ambulance, while the other tried to wake me, which was a hopeless struggle.

As the voices started fading into the background I saw my life flashing in front of me. Though my hearing was gone I could still barely see. The two figures that I could make out were the paramedics. They had already put me on the stretcher and started covering my face with a sheet. It was then that I knew for sure that I was dead.

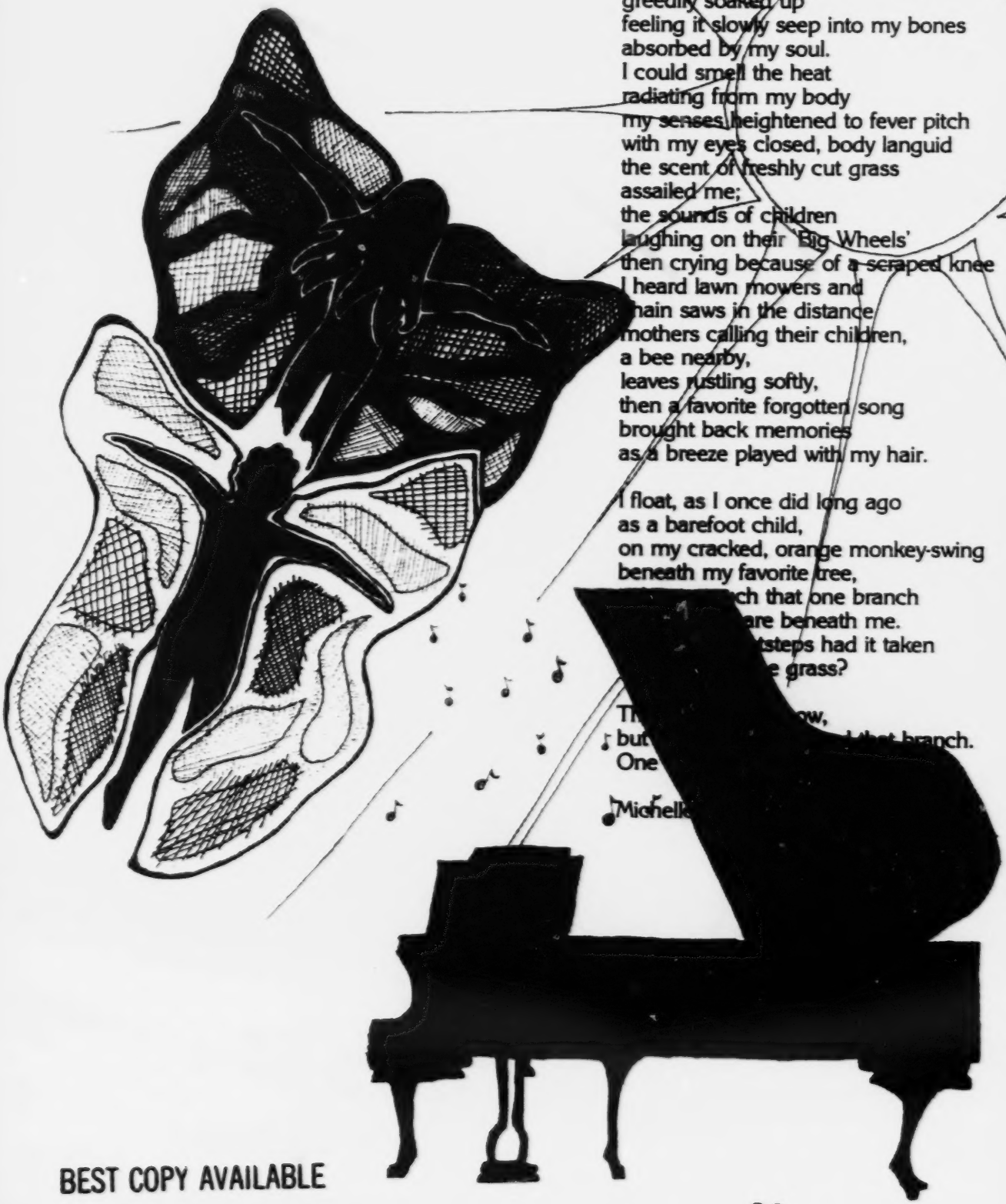
My parents were furious. They had enmity in their eyes towards the paramedics, as if it were the paramedics' fault. I think they wanted not to believe that I was dead.

My parents mourned for many days before they made my funeral arrangements. I was to be interred on June thirteenth. I was dressed in a newly bought tuxedo and had a gold chain strung across my neck. At the funeral Father Brodrick, a priest I knew very well, said the mass and a few ending words.

It was now that I would begin my journey to heaven (hopefully). As I left my body I heard a voice calling from beyond the darkness. As I followed the voice I came to a staircase that looked never ending. As I started to climb the everlasting staircase I began to feel lonely. Melancholy was setting in and I felt I had nowhere to go but up and up. When I reached the middle section of the staircase, which was about a mile up, there was a sign that said; Staircase to Heaven No Blacks allowed. This was very strange for on earth there was also prejudice. Since I was not black I continued. When I came to another sign it said; Beware of Jewelry Thieves. This was turning out to be an experience exactly like life. The only good thing so far was that there was no war or poverty.

Being of the Christian faith, I had learned that God had vowed to give us peace in heaven. He would give counsel to those who needed it also. This so-called afterlife was really a reflection of life itself.

I was so displeased with the way things were turning out I started descending the staircase.

If I had known death was so unpleasant I would not have been envious of death when I was among the living.

ONE SUMMER DAY

One summer day passed in a moment
as I lay on my lounge chair,
like an offering to some sun god
reveling in the warmth my skin
greedily soaked up
feeling it slowly seep into my bones
absorbed by my soul.
I could smell the heat
radiating from my body
my senses heightened to fever pitch
with my eyes closed, body languid
the scent of freshly cut grass
assailed me;
the sounds of children
laughing on their 'Big Wheels'
then crying because of a scraped knee
I heard lawn mowers and
chain saws in the distance
mothers calling their children,
a bee nearby,
leaves rustling softly,
then a favorite forgotten song
brought back memories
as a breeze played with my hair.

I float, as I once did long ago
as a barefoot child,
on my cracked, orange monkey-swing
beneath my favorite tree,
ch that one branch
are beneath me.
tsteps had it taken
e grass?

Th ow,
but branch.
One

Michell

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Wondering and dreaming

M. Agnew

II
84

Perceptual Reality

People's perception of the past and expectations for the future are things of questionable reality. I remember sitting on a jungle-gym when I was very young, with my eyes fixed on the ground as the clouds passed over the sun, making the world alternate between darkness and light. The experience was magical to me because when the clouds were in front of the sun, I would imagine that it was not the clouds causing the phenomenon, but some great temperament alternating between solemn gloom and bright, soothing warmth. The world seemed to be forever changing; and to be suddenly warmed by the sun on my back after being chilled by the dismal gray, gave me a feeling of blissful satisfaction. Even the sounds of the other kids playing seemed to grow hushed as the darkness swallowed everything, and then grow to a pleasant din as the dizzying light invaded every angle and corner. Caricature shadows were cast on the baking blacktop, and a dry, dusty taste was in my mouth. This experience, which was magical to me, might not even have existed in the memory of another person who was there on that same day. Everyone's perception of the past is slightly different, yet there was the actual event that occurred. So reality is lost in time when our minds warp it in the thought process.

Maybe one could record reality through some omniscient, objective super-computer, which records all facts. That might be reality preserved, but it would be some time before such a device is feasible. Understandable reality exists somewhere between a sum-total of everyone's perceptions and the events that actually occurred in the past.

Our expectations for the future are not always what actually occurs in reality. The worst thing someone can do is to live his or her life in regret because his vision of the future reality was not achieved. The best thing one can do is to try to achieve his vision of the future, and not become disappointed if it varies slightly from the ideal. I see in my future: going to college, becoming successful, and finding someone to care for. If this dream is not real, I will soon find out, but I will not regret things I have done or not done. One cannot predict the future reality, but only make the best decisions in the present, based on memories which are questionable in their reality. So, my future actions will be fairly unpredictable. Dreaming without trying is unreal. Chasing one's dream is real.

By Rob Irvine

THE CLASSROOM

this is her best work
she says
the meaning is unfathomably deep
and significant

what does it mean

he asks

read it, and you tell me

a silence envelopes the classroom
and the brightest student raises her hand

it means
that life is like a river
the tides rising and ebbing
and the wind eroding the beach

close
but you have only begun
to touch upon its deepness
to its inner core of reality
that relieves the fantasy

another brave soul attempts
to solve the unsolvable

it means that life is like a cat
every human a mouse
and the last to be caught wins

very near
but shallow in your interpretation
shame

a more timid boy
with acne
tries his hand

it compares life
to a test tube
filled with chromium sulfate
humans
are magnesium particles
waiting to be dropped in

what does that mean
hubert
you must be wrong
dead wrong

then what does it mean
oh mighty and omnipotent pedagogue

exclaims timid hubert

if
after one reading
the implications of this masterpiece
elude you
there is no hope
i cannot explain
you know
or you don't know
it's as simple as that

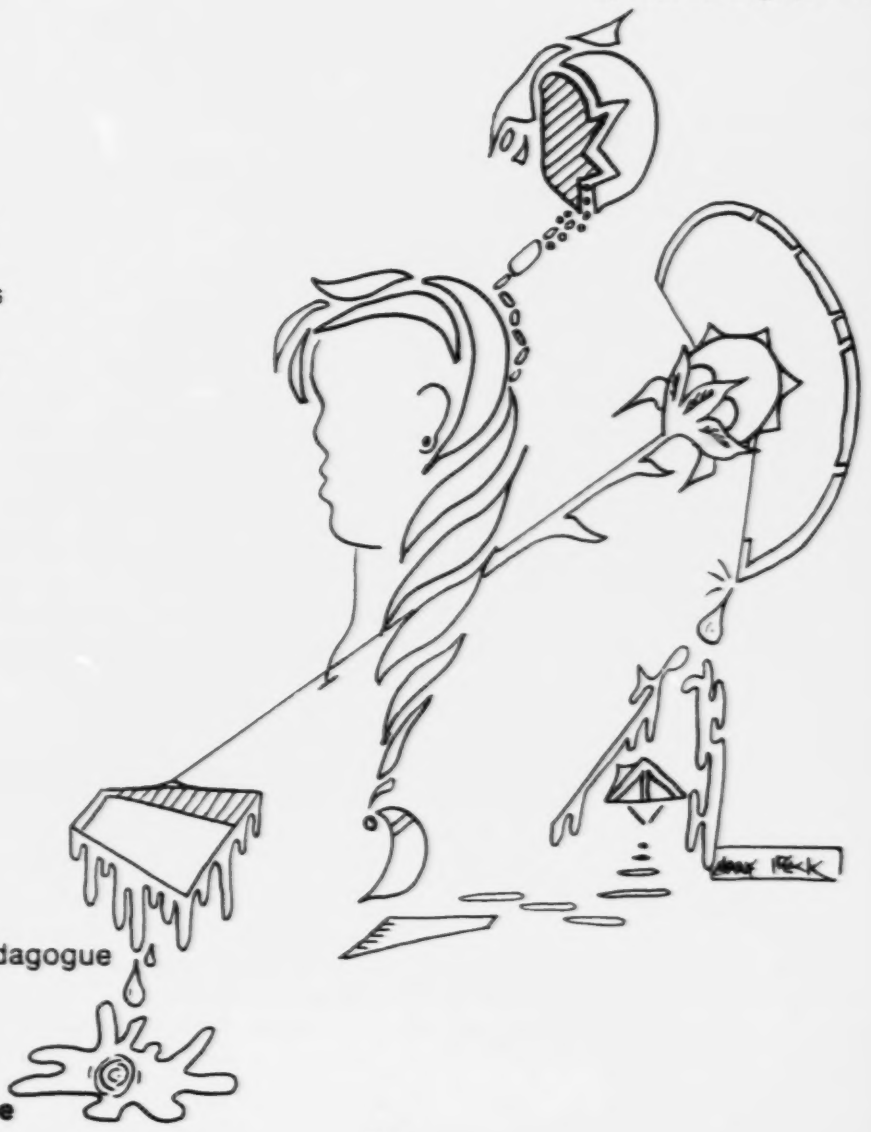
a heavy collective sigh
echoes through
the classroom
and the bell rings

what does the thing mean, anyway

an interested colleague asks

i haven't the foggiest
is the distant reply

By Anna Georgiopoulos



ONE TIN SOLDIER RODE AWAY

Elissa Kotzin

Scene: Memorial Gardens Cemetery

Time: Saturday afternoon, September 20, 1969

Characters: Angela Torrio, age 16, high school student; Marjory Torrio, age 43, Angela and Johnny's mother; Johnny Torrio, age 19, soldier, deceased; Aunt Mary, age 76, great aunt of Marjory Torrio; Father Sawyer, age 49, priest from local church; Jenni Harrington, age 19, Johnny's girlfriend; Peter Callahan, age 19, Johnny's best friend.

Curtain: Stage is dark. A spotlight shines on a girl sitting centerstage. To her left is a gravestone. Flowers surround the stone. Two small American flags are crossed in front of the stone. The stone reads: Here Lies Jonathan A. Torrio; b. January 4, 1950 — d. September 7, 1969

Angie: Afternoon Johnny. It's a real nice day today. (looks around) Yep, sun's shinin'. This is a real nice cemetery Johnny. Really peaceful and quiet. Yeah, you must like it here. Everyone was at the house last night. They brought food and everything. They were all saying how you were a real war hero, and how lucky I was to have had you as a brother. They said that you died with honor, and how I should be real proud of you. Well, I'm not very proud of you dying. I'm sorry, I didn't mean that. I think all the people talking about you upset Mom. She loved you so much. I don't know how she handled the news when it came.

(another spotlight shines on a fragile looking woman, waering a plain dress and apron. Angie straightens the flowers around the grave.)

Mother: (DSR, reading a telegram) Dear Mrs. Torrio, we regret to inform you (reading slower) of the death of your son, Jonathan. (crumples letter) Oh God, no! No, not Johnny! No, please no! (covers her face with hands)

(spotlight goes out on Mrs. Torrio)

Angie: She sure took it hard; we all did, you know. I remember how upset she got when she read your letters. She was so worried about you. I read all of your letters too, at least a billion times. I remember trying to imagine what you were thinking about when you wrote them. I don't blame you for being scared, Johnny. I know I would have been.

(spotlight shines on a young man dressed in a uniform. Angie pulls at the grass around the grave.)

Johnny: (DSL, sitting on a foot locker, writing a letter) Dear Mom and Angie, I miss you both a lot, and I wish I was home with you now. (pause) Things are pretty quiet here. We're being moved out in the morning though, somewhere in the highlands. (looks up and sighs) It isn't safe up there, and we all know it. The only reason we're going, is because the last company that went up there, never came back. (pause) I don't want to die; not here, not now. I pray to God every morning and every night that I'll see another day. (pauses, and reads letter over) I only have another month left over here, and I can't wait to come home. I love you both, Johnny.

(spotlight goes out on Johnny)

Angie: Everyone was trying to console us last night. You know, saying all of those good things about you and everything. (half laugh) Aunt Mary was there. I don't think she stopped talking all night.

(spotlight shines on elderly woman, wearing a colorful dress and hat)

Mary: (USR) Good evening Marjory. How are you feeling dear? And how is little Angela? Oh, my, my, yes, such a tragedy. Yes, well, I know exactly how you feel. There's nothing more distressing than losing a member of the family. Why when my second husband died, I went utterly to pieces. It was the most horrible time in my entire . . .

(spotlight goes out on Aunt Mary)

Angie: Father Sawyer from the church was there too, Johnny. You remember him. He's the bald one; the one we laughed at when his hair piece fell off during services. (laughing) You never did like church much, did you? But you said that you prayed to God every day, (wistfully) just like we used to.

(spotlight shines on a middle aged priest sitting in a chair, reading the Bible. Angie plays with the hem on her dress)

Father: (DSL) I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth . . .

(spotlight goes out on Father Sawyer)

Angie: (sigh) We visited Grandma two days ago. She's been really sick. Mom told her about what happened. She didn't say anything, but I know she was sad. She loved you a lot too. Your friend Peter stopped by yesterday afternoon. He's lost some weight since I saw him last.

(spotlight shines on a young man, wearing a pair of faded jeans and a t-shirt.)

Peter: (USL) Hi Angie. I, I'm real sorry about Johnny. (pause) I never thought that, well, that would ever happen. I told him that he should've gone into the National Guard, but no, he had to go and enlist in the Army! He said that it was his duty to go fight that crazy war! Why didn't he listen? Why? (pause) He could've been alive today if he'd have just listened to me! (takes out a bandana, and wipes his eyes, pretending the only reason he took it out was to put it on) I don't know. (sigh) It's just not gonna be the same without him. We had so many plans about what we were gonna do after college. So many plans . . .

(spotlight goes out on Peter)

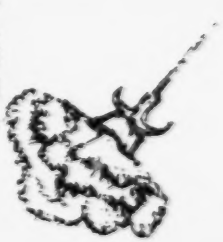
Angie: He was practically crying. I think he thought it was his fault because you didn't listen to him. Oh, um, Mom called Jenni right after we got the news. She came right over to the house. I like her. She's a really nice person. When you picked 'em, you sure picked 'em good.

(spotlight shines on a young woman wearing a light yellow skirt with a white blouse. Angie goes back to plucking at the grass.)

Jenni: (DSR) Angie, I just want you to know how sorry I am. I loved Johnny a lot. He was different than most guys. He always knew what he wanted. He was always so sure of everything. And he was the nicest guy I've ever met. He cared. I mean really cared about everyone. (crying) Oh God, it's just not fair! He was only 19 years old! People aren't supposed to die when they're that young! He never had enough time to do all of the things that he'd told me about; all of the things he'd always dreamed of doing! It's just not fair! (pause) He was going to go to college after he got home. He wanted to be an architect. Did you know that? He said that he was going to design whole entire cities some day. We were gonna get married and he was going to build us the prettiest house around. You know, white picket fence and everything. (pause) He wanted to be famous one day. (laugh) He wanted so much; so much out of life. So much . . .

(spotlight goes out on Jenni)

Angie: It sure isn't gonna be the same without you Johnny. (wipes her eyes) Why'd it have to happen to you? We saw pictures and heard statistics on t.v., but somehow it wasn't real. Not until we got the telegram. (pause) It's such a stupid war! (angrily) Why? (pause) People say they understand, but they don't, not really. How could they possibly understand what it's like to lose your brother and your best friend all in one day, all at once? They couldn't understand that. (pause) I went up to your room last night. I stayed there all night, like I was waiting for you to get home or something. I waited and waited . . . oh why didn't you come home? (longer pause, stops crying) I'm sorry. You always hated it when I cried. I wish I could promise you that I won't do it again, but I can't. (sniffs, looks up) It's getting late. (breathes deeply) I brought you these flowers. I know it's not very practical, but I knew you'd like them. The guy who sold them to me said they'd last for a while. Well, I'd better get goin'. I hope you don't mind if I stop by every now and then. I mean, when I get lonely and need someone to talk to, just like old times. (stands up) I love you Johnny; everyone does. I always will. I'll go now. (whispers) Goodnight Johnny, sleep well.



(spotlight goes out. Angie exits stage right)

Wanderer

Fate will not find me at hell's door
nor clinging to pearly gates.
Only I know what is best for me
and that is the road I take.

Karen Grumme

A Problem

A snowball
t
u
m
b
l
i
n
g
down a mountain s
i
d
e

gathering a heavier burden
as it forever
TRAVELS

Sherri Levine

Jeff Lynn

A Time To Begin

By Marggi Kerness

At 72, Jonathan Riven was not a happy man. His wife's unexpected death, a year earlier, had destroyed his life and he made sure that everyone around him knew it. He had lived for his beloved wife and when she left him without any warning, she took with her all of poor Jonathan's happiness and security. There was no one left in the cold, icy world who could possibly care for a grey, stooped old man with a pot belly and dull, sagging eyes and Jonathan retreated into a lonely world of isolated bitterness.

He had nothing these days but an echoing old house and a heartful of cherished memories. His marriage to Anne had been long, warm and beautiful. The happy years had floated by like a parade of warm summer days and clear, starry nights. They had supported each other through the many laughs and tears found along the winding path of life. Jonathan had known that Anne would always be there to hold his hand and gaze at him with that special look of tenderness and devotion that was reserved for only him. Her death had been a very nasty trick.

Jonathan spent hours sitting in the elegant living room staring at the portrait of Anne in her rose-colored sweater that stood on the mantle. He gazed into her twinkling blue eyes and the past came alive. He remembered giggling over an ice cream soda with his high school sweetheart and he remembered how beautiful she looked at their wedding with a delicate white flower in her shining, dark hair and a sparkling smile lighting up her face. He saw them as young, proud parents showering their love on the miracle of life they had created. Together they guided their only child, a bubbly little girl named Meg, to maturity. Jonathan's consulting firm flourished and the little family explored the world. They had picnics, went to the beach, spent fun-filled days in amusement parks and eventually bought their rambling dreamhouse. The years went by and Meg was married in their backyard on a gentle spring morning underneath the flowering plum tree in which she played as a girl. The newlyweds moved across town and soon gave birth to the Rivens' first, rosy-cheeked grandson. Three other plump, pink babies followed and Jonathan and Anne delighted in their new roles as grandparents. They enjoyed many exciting excursions and family holidays with their children and grandchildren and felt very content with their peaceful lives. More time passed, the grandchildren grew into young adults and Jonathan retired to live a relaxed old age.

Jonathan's daydreams shattered into a nightmare and tears escaped his eyes as he thought of the drunken driver who had taken Anne away and created the enormous void in his life that could never again be filled. Violent shivers filled his body. His anger and pain began to boil as gasping sobs of disbelief, loneliness and frustration pierced the throbbing silence in the memory-filled room.

"WHY?" he screamed at the top of his lungs. "Why? Why? Why me?"

Jonathan's rare display of grief was interrupted by a furry calico kitten who entered the room wearing an inquisitive expression. "Get out of here!" Jonathan shrieked at the innocent animal who had been a birthday present from his grandchildren. Twelve year old Elana had named the cat Fluffy and the kids had intended her to be a companion for Jonathan in his huge home. Jonathan had been far from thrilled about the gift and had only accepted it to avoid hurting the children. Since then, he had grumbled constantly over "that nuisance of a cat" as he picked silky cat hairs from the furniture and cleaned the smelly litter box. He was blind to the hilarious tricks performed by the frolicking bundle of energy and continued to hate the animal.

"Get out of here!" he hollered again at the dumbfounded kitten who had not moved. "Can't you understand? I do not want you near me! Go away, you stupid idiot! I don't want you!"

Jonathan's worn out body quivered violently and his sorrow exploded once again into despairing sobs. There was no way to rebuild all of the walls of his life that had tumbled down and he felt as if he were drowning in a murky pool of hopeless self-pity, anger and loneliness. The frightening thought of suicide became a tempting solution to the binding trap that clutched his heart. Without Anne, nothing could ever make him happy again and there was no reason to live.

The melancholy sound of Jonathan's bleeding heart permeated the quiet house and the compassionate kitten, who had not left because she was stubbornly devoted to the old gentleman, climbed into Jonathan's lap to find out what was wrong. In the midst of a sob, Jonathan felt the gentle tickling of Fluffy's whiskers on his wrinkled cheek. His tears slowed as he absorbed the soft feeling of the cat stroking his face and listened to the loving purr of the animal's racing motor.

Jonathan eyed the kitten uncertainly and then put his arm around its body and held it close as he petted its colorful coat. An incredible feeling of warmth began to soothe Jonathan's tired body as a twinkle of love was rekindled in his bitter heart.

The animal that he had hated was now giving him the warmth and affection he had been denying himself for so long. The wall of isolation that he had built was falling down. Jonathan breathed a cleansing sigh of relief and realized the world was not quite as cold as he had thought. He heard bluebirds singing in the flowering plum tree as he rose to dial his grandchildren to thank them for their wonderful present.

Reflection of the Past

Anne Marie Comi

The house so very old and decrepit, yet it had a strangely beautiful aura. Could it not be restored to its former magnificence? Up the steps I walked and to the door which groaned in protest. The house had been willed to me by my Great-aunt Stephanie, who had lived here her whole life, and now, over thirty years later my first chance to take a look had finally come.

My eyes gradually became accustomed to the darkness. A thick layer of dust had settled everywhere, but now it came to life and assaulted my nose. Time seemed to have stopped in this old structure, and I stepped softly to avoid breaking the silence. Around me were old pieces of furniture turned grey with age and disuse. Eerily, the light played upon the disturbed dust and my imagination.

The steps creaked sharply under me. The first room entered told me instantly that this was the chamber where Stephanie had slept every night of her life. Dominating the room was a large canopy bed and a tall solemn dresser. Next to the bed was a beautifully carved full length mirror. The grey film of dust allowed only a dull reflection. Something was needed to clean the mirror and the wash-cloth next to a porcelain wash basin was just the thing. Out of habit, I dipped the cloth into the basin and then realized it was empty. Still, I reached over, cleaned the mirror and looked into it.

A little girl with golden hair tied up in a huge bow and wearing a light blue dress and white petticoat looked back at me. She turned and began skipping around the room in eager anticipation. It was a reflection of Stephanie when she was perhaps nine years old. Even the room had become much brighter and more colorful. The door opened, and a huge man walked into the room. The girl squealed with delight as he handed her a brightly wrapped present.

The image gradually blurred, but before I could react, it cleared to reveal a new picture. It was a beautiful young woman luxuriously brushing her long hair and humming to herself as she completed her toilet. Quickly, she admired herself in front of the mirror at different angles. There came a knock upon the door and a handsome young man entered. With a smile, she took his arm and they both exited. The picture faded.

The darkness of the next reflection revealed that it was night. The bed was occupied by a man and a golden haired woman. In obvious bliss, they were asleep in each other's arms. Left open, the closet exposed a lovely white wedding gown hung carefully upon a hanger. A delicate veil strewn across a chair fluttered lightly under a revolving ceiling fan. The movement of the blades increased, reducing the image to a haze as the mirror grew dark and cold.

The mirror next framed a tearful scene. Stephanie was a little older now with a toddler clinging to her apron. She held her husband in her arms. Awkward in his soldier's uniform, he stiffly tried to comfort her and hide his own feelings. He kissed her tenderly and left. Weeping softly, she sank into the bed. The baby wailed and clambered for his mother's attention.

My eyes closed with a shudder. Daring to look again, I saw a desolate figure in a black gown. In one hand, Stephanie slutched a telegram, in the other, a picture of her husband, my Great-uncle Richard. She stood in shocked and stoney silence. The notice was brief. "We sincerely regret the death of your husband, Captain Richard M. Hill." There was the stamped signature of President Woodrow Wilson and under it was signed the United States Department of War.

Then before my eyes, she grew old. It was horrible to see the deep lines show on her face. Her hair turned grey and her body became bent and sickly. This was the Great-aunt pictured in the family photograph album. A great sadness fell over me and I turned away.

I simply had to leave the house. The old mirror, however, would not be left. It was as though the past somehow wanted to become part oif the present. The mirror was heavy and it was a struggle to carry it down the steps and out the front door. Driving away, I thought about what had just been revealed to me and wondered at its meaning.

Denise Giordano

I admitted something to myself
It stabbed me like a knife
And I doubled over in pain
I lay on the cold hard floor
Bent and crying
As I realized
I was not the best.

Gillian Williams

forever

The earth is below us
As we float away free
Stay with me always; if an
"always" can be
With the warmth I feel
As you hold me tight
We are as two distant stars
In an eternal night
If we are meant to be together
Any time, it shall be forever . . .

Paula Anne Mueller

Knute Hvalsmarken

Thin

Maybe.
if I get thin,
they will see me.

They will see me as I am,
the one and only me.

They just don't understand me.

But why should they?

The only thing I am
is this hulking mass of fat.
Fat is dull.
Fat is ignorant of the world.
Fat is knowing people talk to you
and see only your fat.
All they see of me is fat.
That, God, is why you must help me.
For I want to be thin,
thin and pretty.
Pretty so that when I see
people look at me,
it just isn't because of all my fat.
All my hulking southern biggoted fat.
I would put a knife to it
and cut it from my body,
if I could do that and live for an hour.
Just so thin, all i am is me.
I would take on the form
of an effervescent being.

Anorexia is just an emaciated fat person.
Who has,
in order to get thin,
taken away what they are.

God, I WANT TO BE THIN.

All I want to be is character.
All I want to be is personality.

I would hope to appeal to people then.
Now I am never sure if people
like or dislike ME,
or if they like or dislike the mountain
of fat that is my jail.

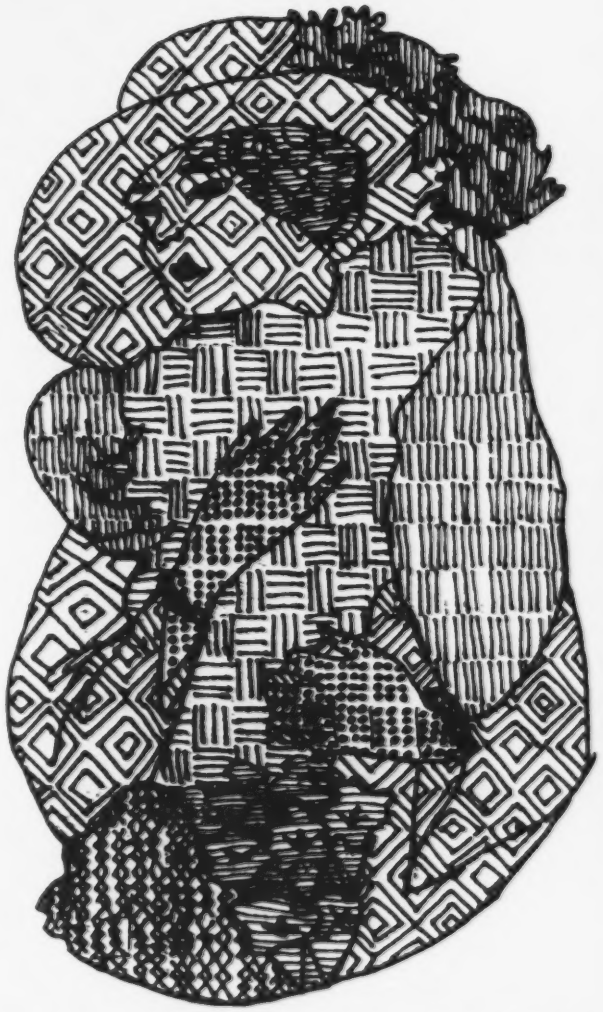
Then,
only then,
would I know,
if I am really as bad as what
other people see.

If I am,
there is very little to do,
except,
be fat.
For all the work of getting thin made no difference.

. . . please pass the potatoes,
and yes, I would like the
cheesecake. G.M.

Daddy's girl
Is packed and ready to go.
With her life stuffed into one trunk,
And three cardboard boxes,
And a biodegradeable shopping bag.
Her hair is unbrushed,
Her shoelaces untied,
But she's daddy's little girl.
Tomorrow . . .
She'll be alone in an empty dorm,
Hanging posters on empty walls,
And eating dry fruit loops.
But today . . .
Daddy's little girl sits on a trunk
Amidst cardboard boxes
With her Raggedy Ann doll
In her arms.

Anon



Michelle Manion

The tears on a young girl's face descend in tiny droplets upon her blushed and warm cheeks. She stands alone, isolated in that world which was made for her. The loneliness began with feelings of not belonging in a high-class society of fast-moving people that don't give a damn for or care about those they step upon on the way up, as long as they never plan to come back down. People are cruel and people are mean; people aren't always what they seem. We just pretend to get along.

A feeling was lost along the way, or maybe it was never really there. The stronger one always takes the first chance to jump back into the game, but what ever happens to the *loser?* He just tends to fade away like the color of a brand new pair of Levis. Nobody even notices.

Be strong; be understanding; don't resent the winner. Don't let the pain you feel deep within your heart take away the glory of your awakening soul. You want to reach out and hold on tight, but you're always afraid that your hands will begin to sweat and will soon lose grip of reality.

Wish the winner well; don't let jealousy get in the way of you r true emotions that you once felt during the period that we were as one. You must take control of your own inner spirit, then let it be free. It will never wander off far. It will always fly right back into your world. The Lord above knows how you really feel and we must have faith that the sun will rise again, even on those gloomy, rainy days when you feel you will never again know the warmth of its glowing rays upon your face. We all must have faith that each day the sun shall shine its light a little brighter, a little stronger.

Paula Anne Mueller

PYTHONIAN IN NATURE: OR FLYING IS STRICTLY FOR THE LOONS

By Dan Keniston

Everyone was in a jovial mood. Young Nahtanoj had that very day returned home from his first semester at college. The family had feasted on roasted pheasant, liberally veiled in a pungent sauce, accompanied by mountains of wild rice, and the finest red wine in all the land. Stories were exchanged, and old times were remembered, and now, with the final course completed, Nahtanoj's father, Rehtaf, retired to the library. Nahtanoj followed closely behind, and seated himself in the chair adjacent to his father's.

This reminded Nahtanoj of the day he had left for college. Drawing smoke from a well packed pipe, neatly positioned in his left hand, Rehtaf, seated in the exact same chair, had instructed his son of the consequences one would suffer if one strayed from the task of studying. A grin crept across Nahtanoj's face as he watched his father reach for his pipe. He knew the routine by heart. First, his father would empty the pipe in the ashtray, striking it abruptly against the glass container three times. Then, he would search for his tobacco, fumbling in his left pocket, then in his right, finally finding it in the breast pocket of his vest. He would then pack the pipe as tightly as it could be packed, and light it.

Silence followed this ritual, a silence that made Nahtanoj uncomfortable. He passed the time gazing at the multitude of neatly stacked books, which rose, shelf upon shelf, many feet above him. Dickens, Bronte, Shakespeare, Dr. Seuss, all of these, and more, he had read as a child. He was inspired by these literary giants, and knew that someday he too would discover the "thing" that caused the Grinch to change his mind, or made Sam like green eggs and ham. These thoughts only served to strenghten Nahtanoj's conviction. He must study philosophy in order to unlock the many mysteries of man and the universe.

As if he were reading his son's mind, Rehtaf rose and addressed him. "Nahtanoj, I sincerely hope your studies are going well. You know that I have high hopes for you. It was always my greatest wish that you would succeed me as president of Amalgamated Cheesecloth Industries."

"Father, I know that you have a great future planned for me, but I have found a new meaning to life. I want to study Philosophy, so I changed my major from business administration to "meaning of life."

Rehtaf's face began to redden. He had worked too hard to secure his son's future, and he wasn't about to see it destroyed by youthful whim. "What nonsense is this? No son of mine is going to destroy his career with this . . . this . . . philosophy rubbish. I'm going to phone the dean right now, and tell him you've made a terrible mistake and have reconsidered." With that, Rehtaf picked up the receiver and began to dial.

"Put the phone down Dad. I've made up my mind. I really want to study philosophy." Rehtaf continued to dial. Nahtanoj reached over the table and disconnected the phone. "Now listen to me Dad. I have done a lot of soul searching since I last saw you, and I have come to the conclusion that we, mankind, are simply a grain of sand on an endless beach, with the cruel ocean lapping at our heels. Our actions are of little consequence to the rest of the universe. I want to understand this universe, not exploit it. The only way I can accomplish this task is to study philosophy, in hope that someday I will understand what life is truly about."

Rehtaf sat back in his chair and said, "These are lofty thoughts for a young lad such as yourself. You have overlooked one thing, however, and that is survival. How are you going to eat? How will you clothe yourself? How will you shelter yourself against the unkind elements? You will be like a naked babe lying alone in the forest. If you

were to continue your studies in business administration, you could make a great deal of money. With this money you would be able to lead a comfortable life and buy what is necessary for survival. You would marry, settle down, buy a house in the suburbs, own two cars, and have 2.5 adorable kids. It would be a dream come true."

"Father, I will survive somehow, but I don't want to be trapped by material goods. I want to understand why man hates, why man loves, why he strives to create and yet destroys so much."

Rehtaf became angry once again. "The true meaning of life is making enough money to live a successful life." Nahtanoj became desperate. He knew he was fighting a losing battle.

"Every new piece of knowledge brings me one step closer to truly living, truly understanding. It is that quest that I must undertake, father, if I am to lead a happy life. With each new level of understanding, I experience greater joy. Therefore, I cannot see any sense in continuing my studies in business administration. There is nothing there for me, no hidden mystery or key to life. I would simply be a marionette. I would be going through the motions. Life would have no meaning."

"Nahtanoj, if you continue to study philosophy, you shall never be welcome in my house again!"

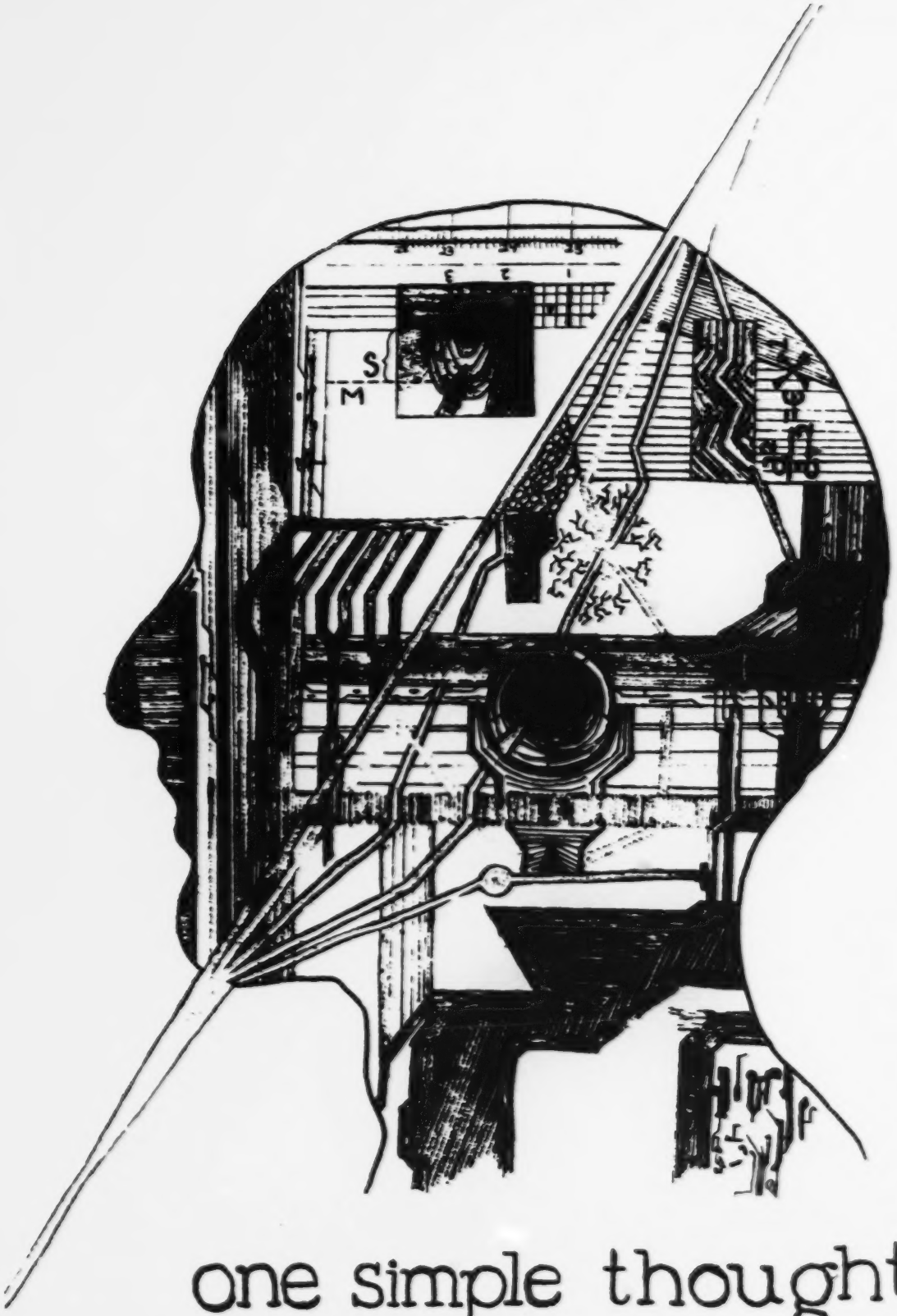
"If I am not welcome in my own father's home, then I will be welcome in heaven," cried Nahtanoj.

Thinking that the angel of life would catch his tired body and take him to the next level of understanding, Nahtanoj climbed upon the window ledge and plunged fifty feet to his death. His father, upon seeing his only son leap to his death, was horror struck. Knowing that his wife was infertile, and that chances of having another successor were slim, he reached for the revolver in his desk drawer, and took his own life. The gods looked down upon all of this and barked. They were pleased. The balance of nature had been maintained. A pragmatist and a dreamer had gone to a better life.

Other versions of this story claim that Nahtanoj did indeed fly, and, upon seeing this, his father unsheathed his .22 caliber longe range elephant gun, and "blew away" his airborne son. And that night the family feasted on roasted fowl veiled in a pungent sauce, accompanied by mountains of wild rice, and the finest red wine in all the land.

I was walking through a mall today and found myself to be a plastic manikin wearing danskins. And I was happy, in my state, until a human walked my way. Then I was reminded of my origins and I beat that human senseless to become a person again. And then I left the mall, leaving through the glass doors with handles outside and a sign: Thank You, please come again.

Jaron Bourke



one simple thought

Denise Giordano

A Letter
To Graduating Swimmers

Though each (of us) may go his separate way, our memories past will be with us always. Together we grew from a single trunk, tomorrow we shall each form a new branch. To grow and prosper in a world of imitators, one must learn to be an innovative pacesetter in the race of life. Our experiences together, good and bad, have given us a foundation of knowledge and confidence to build our own lives upon. With a teacher, friend, and coach with wisdom and empathy, friendships endure any hardship. We have conquered not only small obstacles, but have learned the progressive steps to achievement. We go with joy and hope in our hearts, and discipline and sincerity in our minds. Good luck to all in every endeavor.

Doc A. Young

1984

It was the year the marines were in Lebanon.
It was the same year the teachers worked to rule.

it was the year of a lot of snow,
and record Hi's and Lo's.

This was the same year they made the shoes out of plastic.
They were big.
A big thing, that is.
A big thing with us girls who noticed they were around.

It was the year of another graduation.
It was the year I cried a lot.
It was the year I smiled a lot.
This same year I made and lost friends.
The same year I thought I had it all together,
Until I took some practice S.A.T.'s.
(But it's okay, I don't like Ivy that much anyway.)

This is the year George Orwell wrote about.
It is the year I will be 17 in.
It is just another year.
But I will remember it better,
if I save this paper.
It was an interesting time.
I learned a lot:

I can name 6 things the endoplasmic reticulum does.
I can tell you about the golden mean.

I can sing.
I can dance.
As long as nobody is watching me.
and NOBODY is!
Sorry, George,
you were wrong.
But I wouldn't mind if I were you.
Because 1984 is O.K.

— except I gained weight.

Gabriella Mirabelli

Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in Nature, but he is a thinking reed.

Blaise Pascal